

THE FIR TREE'S LAST VIGIL

THE Bethlehem star now crowns the fir tree, the sacrifice which the north woods send yearly to Madison Square, to die there that New York may not forget the greatest day of the year. Amid the roar and clangor of Broadway it is to burn for a space with red and green and purple and gold electric lights, a beacon proclaiming peace on earth; and die, suttie-like.

They prepared the fir tree yesterday for the vigil which will end with its life. Electricians busied themselves about its base, untangling wire and making connections. Along the dirty snow patches lay a string of lights burning brightly like the first tulips of spring. The tinkling bell of a Salvation Army Santa Claus battled valiantly against the clatter of riveters in a new building across the park. People hurrying past looked at the tree and smiled.

Stark and bold against the sky, the Christmas tree spread its branches. The star on its topmost twig stood out blackly as though someone had punched a tiny hole in the blue heaven. The fir seemed to dream in the raw winter air. Perhaps of the silent woods, where the snow is clean and two feet deep. Perhaps of Friday, when men and women will sing carols beneath its glow.

And then, when Christmas has passed, leaving men a little better for its coming, the tree, old and brown and dead, its spirit fled with the Christmas spirit, will vanish.

"It is as immortal as I am," Thoreau once said of one of its fellows, "and, perchance, will go to as high a heaven, there to tower above me still."

It may be, in the land where Christmas is a year long, the ghosts of the fir trees that died at the Yuletide stand forever in their panoply while cherubim play beneath them.

F. F. V. DE W.

LOGWOOD CHEER FOR 15,000

News That Britain Will Let Cargo Through Brightens Dyers' Christmas. Paterson, N. J., Dec. 20.—Fifteen thousand employees in the dyeing department of the silk industry here felt more like having a merry Christmas last night, when John J. Fitzgerald, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, announced that the State Department hopes to lift the British embargo on logwood.

A letter from Washington to Mr. Fitzgerald brought the news that the British government will doubtless permit one cargo of logwood to come through to this country. The logwood, however, that either the logwood itself nor the dyes made therefrom shall be sent to Germany.

Unless the supply of dyes in several factories is replenished within a month, it is predicted that workers will be out of a job.

LAND BANKS TO AID FARMS

Mortgages Would Back Bonds In System Proposed by Congress Bill. Washington, Dec. 20.—A rural credit bill to be introduced in both houses after the holidays was virtually completed to-day by the special joint committee created by the last Congress.

The measure provides for a system of cooperative local associations, federated with regional land banks, which banks would have the power to issue bonds based on the land mortgages of the local associations. The twelve land banks would be supervised by the government through a board appointed by the President. They would be distributed in accordance with agricultural needs and would have a combined capital stock of not less than \$6,000,000.

Baff Murder Inquiry Fails

With the slayer of Barnett Baff, the West Washington Market chicken handler, still at large, the grand jury which investigated the crime, after one year of intermittent sessions, was dismissed yesterday by Judge Malone in General Sessions. The court reminded the grand jurors that they had been engaged in a work of "great public interest in this community," and added that it was "well known" that they were doing nothing more to submit to them on that subject.

400 WITH KOENIG KEPT ON PAYROLL OF HAMBURG LINE

Why Company Doing No Business Maintains Big Force Is Mystery.

KAISER PROVIDES FUND, IS REPORT

Metzler, Plotter's Secretary, Startles Secret Service Men by New Revelations.

Frederick Metzler, the young secretary of Paul Koenig, head of the secret service of the Hamburg-American Line, who has been a prolific source of information for the Federal authorities since his arrest last week, was on the grill again yesterday. His new revelations concerning the work of Koenig and the big steamship company as-tounded the Secret Service men.

Information reached the United States Attorney's office yesterday that the Hamburg-American Line, though doing no steamship business at all, is maintaining on its payroll about 400 of its original employees. All their salaries had been reduced, but several months ago their pay was increased and back money was paid to them. Just why the company is maintaining practically its entire passenger department in the first, second and stateroom divisions is interesting the Federal authorities.

There is also maintained in the company's office at 45 Broadway a school for instruction in the German language, which is under the direction of Professor August Prehn, of the Columbia Grammar School, of this city. The German classes are attended by about eighty of the 110 Americans who are still on the payroll of the Hamburg-American line. It was said yesterday that the idea was that of the employees themselves and that the company has nothing to do with the tuition.

Kaiser Provides Funds, Is Belief. It is believed in the steamship district that the Hamburg-American Line, although doing no business, is maintaining its big staff on funds provided by order of the German Emperor himself.

Despite the patriotism of the Germans employed by the steamship company, it became known that there was a general feeling of satisfaction among many of them when the Federal authorities arrested Paul Koenig, Koenig's secretary, and his wife, who were generally disliked. Word reached the Federal building yesterday that a wine celebration over Koenig's arrest was suppressed on board the Hamburg-American liners in Hoboken.

Metzler, on the other hand, was well liked by the employees of the company. He was born in this country of German parents. Persons in the steamship service who had been connected with Koenig usually preferred to deal with his secretary.

Metzler's confession has not been hurried, and within a few days he will be a witness before the grand jury. It is said that he has connected Koenig and von Papen in the conspiracy against munition plants in this country and in Canada. It has been established that George Fuchs, who turned against Koenig, had been working for the General Electric Company in Schenectady.

Hotel Register Obtained. Hans Schwartz, of the Iroquois Hotel, brought to the United States Attorney yesterday from Buffalo the pages of the hotel register for September 28. One of these bears the inscription "W. F. Munde and wife." Munde was one of the aliases under which Koenig operated. Munde and his wife were assigned to Room 384. An adjoining room, No. 382, was assigned to C. D. Decker and F. H. Reimer. Decker was the alias used by Richard Smith Leyendecker, the artist who was connected with Koenig.

Mrs. Koenig, wife of the plotter, went to the Federal Building yesterday, accompanied by counsel, to plead privilege, but Roger Wood, before whom she was taken, informed her that she would not be required as a government witness.

Samuel Gampers, head of the American Federation of Labor, spent the day before the Federal grand jury that is investigating the charges that Franz von Rintelen, by the aid of David Lamm, financed Labor's National Peace Council. He probably will be recalled to-day with Secretary Morrison of the federation. Mr. Gampers, who was called to testify regarding information that came to him from labor men concerning the work of the council, said, it is reported, that he knew of no labor man having been corrupted by funds of von Rintelen.

Testimony To Be Taken Abroad. Judge Julius M. Mayer granted permission for commissions to go to Germany and England to take testimony for Dr. Herbert Kinnale and Engelbert Bronkhorst, who are soon to be tried for alleged bomb conspiracies.

Frederick Schleindl, credit clerk of the National City Bank, was released by Magistrate Nolan in \$5,000 bail. He was arrested for purloining papers from the bank for the use of Paul Koenig. As the value of the papers was said to have been exaggerated, the Magistrate reduced the bail to \$25,000 to \$5,000. Secret Service men had stated that the stolen papers were worth \$100,000.

G. Edwin Gregory, cashier of the National City Bank, said that his institution was applying all its resources to safeguard its clients and customers in the future. While an investigation of Schleindl's activities is well going on, the extent of the information he obtained from the bank's foreign department has not yet been determined.

Neutrality Law Changes Now Ready for Approval

Washington, Dec. 20.—More than thirty recommendations for changes in the Federal neutrality laws have been prepared for the consideration of Attorney General Gregory by assistants concerned in enforcement of neutrality statutes.

The amendments proposed, it is believed by those who drafted them, will cover every contingency such as has arisen in this country in the last year. Such recommendations as Mr. Gregory approves probably will be sent to Congress for its consideration after the holiday recess. Officials of the department said to-day that other arrests were expected soon in connection with the alleged plot discovered in New York to blow up the Welland Canal. Reports, however, that Paul Koenig and those associated with him had spies in all the large cities of the country were said to be unfounded.

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PLOTTER DOOMED MISS DOTY HEARD NIAGARA BRIDGES FOR FIVE MINUTES

Trapped at Erie, He Dumps Explosive Into Lake and Eludes U. S. Agents.

BIG POWER HOUSES ALSO TO BE BOMBED

Conspirator Flees to Pittsburgh, Then to Headquarters Here, Hotly Pursued.

[By Telegraph to The Tribune.] Pittsburgh, Penn., Dec. 20.—A plot to blow up the big power houses on the Canadian and American sides of Niagara Falls and to destroy the big Michigan Central and Grand Trunk international railway bridges was frustrated last week in Erie, Penn., when the conspirator, alarmed at the closeness of government Secret Service agents, dumped his supply of high explosives into the waters of Lake Erie off Waldemar Park.

The plot, which had been carefully worked out and entrusted to able hands, was of such magnitude as to cause serious alarm in the Department of Justice. Full details were learned to-day from a representative of the Secret Service department who has been working on the case for several weeks. This official admitted that the master minds behind the plot were those who plotted to destroy the Welland Canal.

About four weeks ago, while government agents were watching a group of men in New York who were scheming to stop the manufacture of war munitions for the Allies and to prevent arms shipments, a trusted agent of a foreign government who has resided in this country several years established headquarters in this city. He came alone and carried on his operations without aid.

Close behind this man came agents of the United States Secret Service. Not for a moment during his stay here was he out of their sight. The government agents learned that orders came to him direct from New York, where the work entrusted to him was being directed.

Code Note Posts Agents. That he might be free from suspicion the plotter got employment in a large plant here making shells for the Allies. He became the most skillful workman in the big shop.

Meanwhile Secret Service agents were busy, and the supply of explosives and mail coming to the conspirator were carefully examined before they reached him.

Tuesday morning a week ago, apparently prepared for the work in hand, the man boarded a Pennsylvania Railroad train for Niagara Falls. Before he reached Erie he began to grow uneasy. When he received a code telegram when the train reached that city he got off and made for the lake.

Closely trailing him came government agents. They reached him a few moments too late to prevent him from dumping the contents of a large leather satchel into deep water off a park shore. Later some of the stuff, said to be a high explosive of great destructive power, was recovered.

After disposing of the explosives the suspect returned to this city, remained two hours and then went to Philadelphia. A few days later he went to New York, where he is now under surveillance. The power houses of the Ontario Power Company, the Canadian Niagara Falls Power and the Toronto Niagara Power Company, on the Canadian side; the New York Hydraulic Power and Manufacturing Company, and the Niagara Falls Power Company, on the American side, and the big international railway bridges were marked for destruction, according to the programme mapped out by the New York conspirators.

NEW TEUTON PLOT IN RUBBER CARGO

Continued from page 1

In a week. She was to take as her baggage the first shipment of crude rubber, but owing to activity of the neutrality squad, a certain German wearing a large white boutonniere may still be waiting vainly for her on the Dutch pier. With the chrysanthemum have faded the hopes of the would-be importers.

Jaeger had arranged with other women to act as agents, and had even sent money to one of them to come from Rotterdam. It was his intention, when he got the scheme well under way, to transfer his duties to a substitute here and return to Germany. Jaeger and his confederates here have retained Harold Deming, of Reed, Gwinn & Deming, as counsel, and on his advice have made complete statements. The point of law involved in their offence is essentially the same as that on which officials of the Hamburg-American Line were recently given prison sentences.

POLICE RECRUIT DIES

School Probationer of November 24 Class Pneumonia Victim.

In the death on Sunday night of William L. Purcell, the Police Department within two weeks has lost a second of the seventy-five probationary patrolmen graduated from the School of Recruits on November 24. The other death was that of William B. Connor, of the East 104th Street station. Purcell was twenty-seven years old, single and lived at 414 Brook Avenue, the Bronx. He entered the school on August 24, when he graduated was sent to the West 135th Street station. During the heavy storm on Monday he contracted a cold which developed into pneumonia.

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afraid you will have to answer it yourself.
Mr. Osborne, who has been at his home in Auburn over Sunday, is expected to return to the prison to-day.

Travelling Jail Exhibit To Be Here in January

The first travelling exhibition on prisons, jails and related subjects will be held January 10-22 at the Russell Sage Foundation, 130 East Twenty-second Street, under the auspices of the Joint Committee on Prison Reform. Mrs. Francis McNeill Bacon, Jr., is chairman. Following its presentation here the exhibition will be taken to Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Albany.

Working devices, models, motion pictures of Auburn, Great Meadow and Sing Sing, and the New York City Correction exhibit from the Panama-Pacific Exposition, will be features at the exhibition.

DISLIKES FOOD; KILLS PARENT

Boy Shoots Stepfather, Then Gives Up—Pleads Self-Defence.
Danbury, Conn., Dec. 20.—John Bochima, forty-five years old, was shot

and killed to-night by his stepson, Alexander Bochima, seventeen years old, after a quarrel, in which the younger man had found fault with the food served at the supper table.

After the shooting the youth walked to the police station, bareheaded and coatless, and surrendered. He says the shooting was in self-defence. Young Bochima told the police his stepfather had flourished a revolver and that in the struggle he wrenched the weapon away and fired twice, one bullet going through the heart.

Delivery of Pianos for Christmas assured, no matter when purchased.



On Christmas Morning Betty Plays "Silent Night"

She has seen her dolls and books. She is wearing the pretty bracelet Aunt Jenny gave her. She has laid aside the little purse with new money, the gift of Uncle Ned. She is fascinated with the most wonderful thing that has come into her young life. She is playing the piano making real MUSIC.

"Silent Night, Holy Night"—mother is thinking of a long-ago Christmas, when the waits sang it in the early morning. There was a Shomacker piano in the drawing-room, but she was too little to play it. And—how sweetly Betty was playing.

Who can doubt the fine influence of good music on the child? Who can afford to deny it when the cost of it is so conveniently spread over the months?

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